

StirFry Seminars & Consulting

July 2013

In Search of a Real Apology

Recently, Senator Jeff Flake's [R-AZ] fifteen year old son, Tanner, tweeted that a "faggot" stole his bike. He also used the moniker of 'niggerkiller' in an online game and tweeted that Mexicans were the "scum of the earth." Senator Flake issued an apology that he was disappointed at his son's insensitivity. The Senator also went on to say, "I've spoken to him about this, he has apologized, and I apologize as well. This language is unacceptable, anywhere."

At first glance, everything seems quite sincere and upfront. We might even be urged by our friends and colleagues to move on since they both apologized and took responsibility. *But, there are real issues here that remain unanswered and questions that still need to be asked.* For example, from whom and where did Tanner 'learn' about these groups? Is this simply Tanner's personal opinion or is it symptomatic of his community, school and/or family? What is the extent of his exposure to Mexicans, African Americans and gays? Is it simply Tanner's 'insensitivity' or rather that he is racist towards African Americans and Mexicans and heterosexist towards gays? What is Tanner actually apologizing for? That he got 'caught' and embarrassed his father (who happens to be a senator) or that he truly understands how painful and derogatory his remarks are to each of these groups? And while we're at it, to whom is he apologizing? Why was it just to his father? Additionally, if these types of remarks are 'unacceptable anywhere,' then why did Tanner feel safe enough to send them to his friends and classmates? And how long has this been going on without anyone even noticing or feeling that something was morally and socially wrong?

What is needed from Tanner is a 'meaningful apology' that has long-term significance, takes responsibility and demonstrates learning and application for him, his family and his community. I would like to propose that Tanner is merely reflecting a nation that lacks the training and the modeling of what makes an 'apology' truly sincere and heartfelt. So, here are some useful pointers for Senator Flake and Tanner, as well as for Paula Deen:

9 MEANINGFUL WAYS TO APOLOGIZE

1. Communicate what you are apologizing for and what you've learned.
2. Reflect on your stereotypes/biases *prior* to the incident.
3. Take responsibility for the 'impact' of your actions, words and perceptions. Avoid defending your good intentions or past history.
4. Be curious about the 'impact' of your actions and remain *open* to hearing reactions from others.
5. Feel and express sincere remorse, empathy and compassion.
6. Follow through by changing your behavior/attitudes at home, in your community and at work.
7. Share what you've learned with your family, colleagues, and community.
8. If possible, apologize to that particular group you've offended and enter into on-going conversations with them.
9. Be willing to hear from those groups that were targeted by validating their concerns, experiences, hurt and anguish.

"If you acknowledge and accept your mistakes, what I see are not your faults, but your goodness. If you make excuses for your mistakes by claiming your goodness and good intentions, then all I see are your faults." (Author Unknown)

Lee Mun Wah

Cross-Cultural Facilitation Techniques
5-day Intensive for Diversity Trainers
Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah
August 10-14, 2013

Saturday: 2 pm-9 pm;
Sunday - Tues: 9 am-5 pm; Weds 9 am-2 pm
Quan Yin Training Center • 2311 8th Street, Berkeley, CA

Facilitating a group with many cross-cultural perspectives and experiences requires a keen understanding and knowledge of how cultural differences can impact group dynamics, relationships and their sense of safety.

In this unique training, Lee Mun Wah will guide each participant through a series of exercises and mindful techniques that will enhance their understanding of the impact of culture on relationships, conflictual cultural situations, as well as how to develop a deeper and more authentic sense of community and openness within diverse groups. Participants will explore their perception and attitudes about diversity issues through the use of films, books, vignettes and personal stories.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO REGISTER, PLEASE VISIT WWW.STIRFRYSEMINARS.COM/BTC

**Let's Get Real:
Unlearning Racism Retreat**
Facilitated by Lee Mun Wah
September 20-22, 2013
Friday 2 pm until Sunday 2 pm
Quan Yin Training Center, Berkeley CA

There is so much that is unsaid in this country about race issues. In this retreat we will explore a variety of ways to have this dialogue on race and racism that will lead to a more intimate and honest conversation and relationship with each other. This retreat is about confronting some of the issues that keep us all from talking to one another about race/racism. It is also about discovering new ways to begin that conversation, how to create a bridge to talk about our differences, exploring what opens us up and what closes us down, and finally, 101 ways to become Culturally Competent in our relationships and workplaces.

On Demand Digital Streaming Rentals of StirFry Films!!

For the first time, Stirfry is making our films available on line/on demand for students & individuals via digitally streamed video. Here, you can view films such as *The Color of Fear*, *Last Chance for Eden* and *Stolen Ground* from the comfort of your own home for a small rental fee; rentals provide a link to the films online, good for 24-hours of viewing. Please note StirFry Seminars' Copyright and Use Agreement prior to purchase. (If instead, you prefer to own a dvd copy of our diversity training films, you can purchase them on the Stirfry Seminars & Consulting website at www.stirfryseminars.com.)

For questions, contact us at: products@stirfryseminars.com or call 510-204-8840 x100. www.diversitytrainingfilms.com

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End of "Summer" Sale!

Get **25%** off for a limited time off of **all** regularly-priced diversity training materials (including Lee Mun Wah's newest book *Let's Get Real: What People of Color Can't Say & Whites Won't Ask About Racism* as well as his book *The Art of Mindful Facilitation*) Enter coupon code **NEWS25** upon online checkout at www.stirfryseminars.com/store.

Some restrictions apply. Expires August 15, 2013



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StirFry Calendar of Events

July 24, 2013 Berkeley, CA	Keynote(s): Walking Each Other Home Not Open to the Public
July 31-August 4, 2013 ** Berkeley, CA	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Skills for Diversity Trainers, Educators & Therapists: Five Day Intensive Open to the Public
August 10-14, 2013** Berkeley, CA	Cross-Cultural Facilitation Skills for Diversity Trainers, Educators & Therapists: Five Day Intensive Open to the Public
August 27-28, 2013 Edwardsville, IL	An Unfinished Conversation Some Events Open to the Public
August 29, 2013 Lebanon, IL	If These Halls Could Talk: Film Showing & Diversity Dialogue Open to the Public

** Held at the Quan Yin Training Center, 2311 8th Street, Berkeley, CA

For StirFry's complete Calendar of Upcoming Events, please visit www.stirfryseminars.com/events

Contact Us: 510.204.8840 Trainings, Films & Diversity Products, ext. 103 • www.stirfryseminars.com • www.diversitytrainingfilms.com